

Saint Nektarios of Egina (1846-1920)

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Life of the Saint.

Our holy Father Nektarios was born on 1 October 1846 at Selymbria in Thrace. His parents, Dimos and Maria Kephalas, were pious Christians but not rich in this world's goods. Their son



was baptized Anastasios and, from infancy, showed great piety and love for study. When his mother taught him Psalm 50, he liked to repeat the verse: I shall teach thy ways unto the wicked and sinners shall be converted unto thee. After finishing elementary school, he was sent by his parents to Constantinople to continue his education, at the same time as working in a shop. The boy did not become entangled in worldly cares, but fixed his mind entirely upon

building up the inner man in the image of Christ by prayer and meditation on the writings of the holy Fathers. When he was twenty, he left Constantinople for a teaching post on the island of Chios. The young people and villagers where he taught were encouraged to live in piety and virtue by his words and above all by the example of his ascetic, prayerful life. On November 7, 1876, he became a monk in the famous Monastery of Nea Moni, for he had long desired to embrace the Aesthetic life. Seeking only those things which are above, he was beloved by all the brethren as the very pattern of gentleness and obedience, and was ordained deacon after one year. Thanks to the generosity of a pious islander and to the protection of Patriarch Sophronius of Alexandria, he was able to complete his studies in Athens and to obtain the diploma of the Faculty of Theology. In 1885, he arrived in Alexandria where he was soon ordained priest, then consecrated Metropolitan of Pentapolis (an ancient diocese in Cyrenaica, in what is now Libya). He was appointed preacher and secretary to the Patriarch, whose representative he became in Cairo, where he had charge of the Church of Saint Nicholas.

Nektarios lost nothing of his humility through these honors, and was able to inspire his flock with zeal for the evangelic virtues. But the love and admiration of the people for him turned to his disadvantage. Certain members of the Patriarchate became jealous of his success and, led on by the Devil, put it about that he was currying favor with the people with the aim of seating himself on the patriarchal throne of Alexandria. The Saint made no attempt to justify



himself but placed all his hope in the promise of Christ who has said: Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account (Matt. 5:11). He was dismissed from his Episcopal Throne; and he embarked for Athens where he found himself alone, ignored, despised and even lacking his daily bread, for he would keep nothing for himself and gave away what little he had to the poor. The meek and humble follower of Jesus Christ planned at first to withdraw to Mount Athos but gave up the idea, for he put the salvation of his neighbor before his own love of monastic retreat. He spent several years as a preacher (1891-1894) and was then appointed director of the Rizarios Ecclesiastical School for the education of priests. The School's spiritual and intellectual standing rose rapidly under his direction. The students found in him a teacher with a deep knowledge of Scripture, of the holy Fathers, and even of secular learning, and a director who exercised his authority with great kindness

and consideration. His administrative and teaching responsibilities – he taught pastoral theology – did not prevent him as a monk from living a life of asceticism, meditation and prayer, nor from fulfilling the high calling of preaching and serving regularly the holy Mysteries, at the School as well as in the Athens region.

However, there glowed in the depths of his heart a burning love for the peace and quiet of life in the monasteries; and this led him to respond warmly to the desire expressed by some of his spiritual daughters that he should found a women's monastery on the island of Egina. This he did between 1904 and 1907 and he retired there in 1908, on his resignation as director of the Rizarios School. Despite countless cares and difficulties, Saint Nektarios saw to the restoration of a type of life that was wholly in the spirit of the ancient Fathers. He gave his utmost bodily and spiritual strength to the construction of the buildings, to divine service and to the spiritual direction of each one of his disciples. They would often see him in his worn-out cassock working in the garden or, when he disappeared for many hours, they would guess he had shut himself in his cell to raise his intellect to God by bringing it down into his heart, to taste there the sweetness of the holy Name of Jesus. Although he desired to flee all contact with the world and strictly limited visits to the Monastery, the fame of his virtues and of his God-given graces spread in the region, and the faithful were drawn to him like iron to a magnet. He healed many lay-people and nuns of



their sicknesses, and brought rain to the island in a time of draught. He comforted, consoled and encouraged; he was all things to all men. He could do all things through Christ who dwelt in him by the Grace of the Holy Spirit. He kept company with the Saints and with the Mother of God, and they often appeared to him during the holy Liturgy or in his cell. During the difficult years that followed the First World War, he taught his nuns to rely from day to day on the mercy of God. He utterly forbade them to keep any food in reserve for their use, instructing them to give away to the poor everything that remained over. Saint Nektarios also found time to write a large number of works on theology, ethics and Church history, in order to strengthen the Church of Greece in the holy tradition of the Fathers, which was often unknown in those days because of Western influences.

Saint Nektarios lived like an angel in the flesh with the rays of the uncreated light shining around him, yet once again he was calum-

niated by certain members of the hierarchy who made malicious accusations about his monastery. He bore these latter trials with the patience of Christ, meekly and without complaint, as he did the painful illness which afflicted him for more than eighteen months before he spoke of it. He thanked God for putting him to the test in this way, and did his best to keep the pain he suffered secret until the last days of his life. After a final pilgrimage to an icon of the Mother of God venerated not far from the monastery, he told his disciples of his coming departure for Heaven and was taken to a hospital in Athens where, after fifty days of suffering borne with a patience that edified all who visited him, he gave up his soul in peace to God on November 8, 1920.

The faithful of Egina, the nuns of his monastery and all the Christians who had come close to him, mourned the loss of the meek and compassionate disciple of Christ who, in the likeness of the divine Pascha of his Master, endured all his life calumnies, persecutions and false accusations. But God has glorified him, and miracles have abounded since his departure for those who approach his relics with faith or who rely on his powerful intercession. His body remained incorrupt for more than twenty years, distilling a delicate, heavenly scent, and then returned to the earth in the usual way. His relics were strongly redolent with the same perfume at the time of their translation in June 1953. This perfume has continued ever since to rejoice the faithful who come to venerate his precious relics with the assurance that Saint Nektarios has been received by God into the abode of the righteous. His veneration was formally recognized in 1961. The list of his miracles grows longer every day, and his shrine at Egina has become the most popular place of pilgrimage in Greece.

Saint Nektarios.

Saint Nektarios, known for his countless miracles of healing, and as, “A Saint for our Time,” was born in 1846 in Selybria, Thrace. When he was fourteen, he left his home and traveled to Constantinople in search of work and study. There, St. Nektarios lived a very modest life constantly praying to Christ and believing that He would provide everything he needed to live. Many acts of kindness were shown to St. Nektarios by his neighbors and townspeople, and it was through them, and by the grace of God, that St. Nektarios became an accomplished academic at the age of twenty-one. By this time, too, St. Nektarios was considered a theological scholar and a devout Christian. Upon completing his studies, he left Constantinople and entered a monastery in Chios.

Some time later, the Patriarch Sophronios of Alexandria, Egypt, offered St. Nektarios a scholarship to study theology at the University of Athens. Upon completing studies at the university, St. Nektarios was ordained to the priesthood to serve in Cairo, Egypt, where he became quite popular as a preacher and confessor. Within five months of his ordination, the Metropolitan of Nubia blessed St. Nektarios with the title of archimandrite, and two months later he was appointed to the high position of Patriarchal Trustee.

It was in January of 1889 that the Metropolitan Nilos suddenly passed away. As the seat was under the Patriarchate of Alexandria, Patriarch Sophronios nominated St. Nektarios to fill the vacancy. Therefore, on January 15, 1889, St. Nektarios was ordained a bishop and began to serve his congregation with humility and an oath to never succumb to the temptations of this world. He served as bishop until countless rumors and false accusations were brought up against him. Patriarch Sophronios became subjected to unbearable pressure regarding the rumors circulating about Metropolitan Nektarios, and he soon stripped Metropolitan Nektarios of his authority and duty as bishop. Upon this humbling and confusing experience, St. Nektarios returned to Athens where he continued to serve God by preaching and teaching in its many churches. His

popularity among the people in Athens again gained him popularity, and led to his appointment as dean of Rizarios Ecclesiastical School in Athens, where he dedicated fourteen years of his wisdom and loving care, until his body forced him to retire on March 24, 1908. Once a new dean was found and instated as his replacement, St. Nektarios retreated to the island of Aegina, to the monastery that he helped to establish years before.

With his return to Aegina, the monastery began to receive countless visitors who sought to be in the presence of St. Nektarios' pious and loving nature. While there, St. Nektarios witnessed the completion of the building of the chapel on the grounds, which he first started in July of 1906. On June 2, 1908, the chapel was dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and he began to settle in and plan for the building of his simple home on the grounds. Throughout the years that he spent in Aegina, St. Nektarios wrote and published many theological treatises, guided the nuns of the monastery toward divine work, and performed many miracles of healing. It was also while serving at the monastery, that St. Nektarios endured many spiritual and physical tribulations, as well as witnessed the magnificent power of the Trinity and the Virgin Mary.

On November 9, 1920, St. Nektarios retired his spirit to the Lord. However, even in death St. Nektarios continues to perform miracles, the first of which occurred in the very hospital room in which he died. With the passing of St. Nektarios, a hospital nurse, assisted by a nun from the monastery, immediately began to change his clothes and threw his undershirt on the next bed. In this bed lay a paralytic, who once the undershirt landed upon him, was instantly healed and jumped out of bed praising God for his miraculous healing. This was the first of many miracles that St. Nektarios began to perform in death. The stories of these miracles, along with his body remaining completely in tact and emanating a magnificent fragrance for twenty years after his death, led the nuns at the monastery to venerate him as a Saint of the Church. Finally, in April of 1961, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople further blessed St. Nektarios with a proclamation of Sainthood.

Ionian Village participants not only learn about the life and miracles of St. Nektarios while at Ionian Village, but they are blessed with the ability to make a pilgrimage to the monastery in which he carried out his life. While there, they visit the house in which he lived and the chapel he helped to build, and they venerate his tomb and relics. Perhaps this is why so many Ionian Village participants return home with such a heartwarming feeling for St. Nektarios.

The Apolytikion of St. Nektarios.

**Selybria's offspring and Aegina's guardian,
the true friend of virtue, revealed in these last times, Nektarios let us, the faithful,
praise as inspired servants of Christ; for he pours out healings of every kind for
those who devoutly cry:**

Glory to Christ who gave you glory!

Glory to Him who made you wondrous!

Glory to Him who through you works healings for all!

Decision of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa.

Alexandria 15th September 1998

The Holy Spirit has enlightened the gathered members of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa, under the leadership of H.B. Petros VII, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa, more than a century since Saint Nektarios, the great Teacher and Father of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Church was expelled from the Church of Alexandria, to reach the following decision:

Taking into account the resolution of the Church to rank Saint Nektarios amongst the saints because of his innumerable miracles and his acceptance within the religious conscience of Orthodox Christians throughout the world, we appeal to the mercy of the ever-charitable God.

We hereby restore the ecclesiastical order of the Saint of our Century, Saint Nektarios, and grant to him all due credits and honors. We beseech Saint Nektarios to forgive both us, unworthy as we are, and our predecessors, our brothers of the Throne of Alexandria, for opposition to the Saint and for all which, due to human weakness or error, our Holy Father, Bishop of Pentapolis, Saint Nektarios, suffered.

*PETROS VII
By the Grace of God
Pope and Patriarch
of Alexandria and All Africa.*

Beloved and faithful children of the Church,

In these modern times, when our way of life is constantly changing, when the products of technology and the numerous experiences of our daily life, confuse man's spirit incurably, crushing the hope of our hearts and destroying man's character, the Saints of our Church bear witness to man's salvation, the majesty of man's spirit and the ontological concept of hope and the recognition of human life.

One of the Great Saints of our Orthodox Church, who lived and experienced the joyful meeting and continuous coexistence with Christ our God, who aimed to build a new world, to separate man from his stained inheritance and to reform the human personality, is Saint Nektarios, Bishop of the ancient Kyrenian Pentapolis, the Wonder-worker.

All that our Church believes and experiences is to be found in the inner personality of Saint Nektarios. This is substantiated through our life-experience.

The whole Grace of the Church exists in his life, and the burning flame which is St. Nektarios, passes on to us the essence of the mystery of the Church.

He is truly formed by great experiences. He is able to transfuse us with holiness and grace because he himself was tested and saved.

Saint Nektarios lived in our Patriarchate and became the humble servant of the world, despite the difficulties caused by malicious intent, the atmosphere of contempt and defeat, enmity and injustice. He achieved absolute humility. In virtuous silence he endured the turmoil of his flaming soul. Like Noah in his ark, he relived the experience of humanity mixing the waters of deluge, the water of Baptism and the tears of his eyes. He overcame every trial and temptation through continuous prayer.

He became the vessel of God's Grace. He is the poor, the unseen, the meek, the kind, the wonder-worker, the protector of God's divine love for mankind.

In the life of Saint Nektarios, the world, mankind, every one of us finds his measure, the scale by which to compare, the truth. We realise the ugliness of our spiritual self-centredness; we

see perfection in the fear that we might wound God's love; we search for the only, the essential evangelical reality - that we must renounce ourselves and take up our cross in our daily lives. And the life of Saint Nektarios also reveals something completely different: the power of man, mobilized by the presence of God, freedom of choice and the deep desire to be a child of God.

110 years have passed since the ordination of St. Nektarios as Bishop of our Patriarchate, and over a 100 years have passed since St. Nektarios, the Great Father and Teacher of our Church, was cast out from the Patriarchate of Alexandria, because of human weakness, error and the influence of the evil one. We, Myself and the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa, calling upon the mercy of God Who so loves mankind, and witnessing by the grace of the Holy Spirit the conscience of the body of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church regarding the holiness of St. Nektarios, admit the injustice which was done against the Saint, restore the canonical order, ask the Saint to forgive us and the fathers and brothers who have passed away, for all that he endured and suffered, and dedicate the year 1999 to the sacred memory of our holy father Nektarios, Metropolitan of Pentapolis, the Wonderworker.

The dedication of the year 1999 to the memory of Saint Nektarios is essentially an invitation to repent, to separate ourselves from the fallen world of destruction and death, and to join with the new risen world in Christ. This is an opportunity for us all to find God and the man of Paradise, to increase our awareness and goodness. This is the heritage and the precious gift of a holy man, who is one of us, St. Nektarios. This is how he overcame destruction, death and time. This is why he exists today.

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ through the intercessions of our Father Saint Nektarios be with you all.

With warm prayers to God for all of you.

*In the Great City of
Alexandria
10th September, 1998.*

Writings of Saint Nektarios of Aegina,

Selected Passages From the Writings of Orthodox Saints
Compiled by Father Demetrios Serfes

Christianity.

Christian religion is not a certain philosophic system, about which learned men, trained in metaphysical studies, argue and then either espouse or reject, according to the opinion each one has formed. It is faith, established in the souls of men, which ought to be spread to the many and be maintained in their consciousness.

There are truths in Christianity that are above out intellectual comprehension, incapable of being grasped by the finite mind of man. Our intellect takes cognizance of them, becomes convinced of their reality, and testifies about their supernatural existence.

Christianity is a religion of revelation. The Divine reveals its glory only to those who have been perfected through virtue. Christianity teaches perfection through virtue and demands that its followers become holy and perfect. It disapproves of and opposes those who are under

the influence of the imagination. He who is truly perfect in virtue becomes through Divine help outside the flesh and the world, and truly enters another, spiritual world; not, however, through the imagination, but through the effulgence of Divine grace. Without grace, without revelation, no man, even the most virtuous, can transcend the flesh and the world.

God reveals Himself to the humble, who live in accordance with virtue. Those who take up the wings of the imagination attempt the flight of Ikaros and have same end. Those who harbor fantasies do not pray; for he that prays lifts his mind and heart towards God, whereas he that turns to fantasies diverts himself. Those who are addicted to the imagination have withdrawn from God's grace and from the realm of Divine revelation. They have abandoned the heart in which grace is revealed and have surrendered themselves to the imagination, which is devoid of all grace. It is only the heart that receives knowledge about things that are not apprehended by the senses, because God, Who dwells and moves within it, speaks within it and reveals to it the substance of things hoped for.

SEEK GOD daily. But seek Him in your heart, not outside it. And when you find Him, stand with fear and trembling, like the Cherubim and the Seraphim, for your heart has become a throne of God. But in order to find God, become humble as dust before the Lord, for the Lord abhors the proud, whereas He visits those that are humble in heart, wherefore He says: "To whom will I look, but to him that is meek and humble in heart?"

THE DIVINE LIGHT illumines the pure heart and the pure intellect, because these are susceptible to receiving light; whereas impure hearts and intellects, not being susceptible to receiving illumination, have an aversion to the light of knowledge, the light of truth; they like darkness... God loves those who have a pure heart, listens to their prayers, grants them their requests that lead to salvation, reveals Himself to them and teaches the mysteries of the Divine nature.

The Church.

The term CHURCH, according to the strict Orthodox view, has two meanings, one of them expressing its doctrinal and religious character, that is, its inner, peculiarly spiritual essence, and the other expressing its external character. Thus, according to the Orthodox confession, the Church is defined in a twofold manner: as a religious institution, and as a religious community (koinonia).

The definition of the CHURCH as a religious institution may be formulated thus: The Church is a divine religious institution of the New Testament, built by our Savior Jesus Christ through His incarnate Dispensation, established upon faith on the day of holy Pentecost by the descent of the All-Holy Spirit upon the holy Disciples and Apostles of the Savior Christ, whom He rendered instruments of Divine grace for the perpetuation of His work of redemption. In this institution is entrusted the totality of revealed truths; in it operates Divine grace through the Mysteries; in it are regenerated those, who with faith, approach Christ the Savior; in it has been preserved both the written and the unwritten Apostolic teaching and tradition.

The definition of the CHURCH as a religious community may be formulated thus: The CHURCH is a society of men united in the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.

The right view of the CHURCH is that the CHURCH is distinguished into the Militant and the Triumphant; and that it is Militant so long as it struggles against wickedness for the prevalence of the good, the Triumphant in the heavens, where there dwells the choir of the Righteous, who struggled and were made perfect in the faith in God and in virtue.

Tradition.

Sacred TRADITION is the very CHURCH; without the Sacred TRADITION the CHURCH does not exist. Those who deny the Sacred TRADITION deny the Church and the preaching of the Apostles.

Before the writing of the Holy Scriptures, that is, of the sacred texts of the Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles of the Apostles, and before they were spread to the churches of the world, the CHURCH was based on Sacred Tradition....The holy texts are in relation to Sacred Tradition what the part is to the whole.

The CHURCH Fathers regard Sacred Tradition as the safe guide in the interpretation of Holy Scripture and absolutely necessary for understanding the truths contained in the Holy Scripture. The CHURCH received many traditions from the Apostles... The constitution of the church services, especially of the Divine Liturgy, the holy Mysteries themselves and the manner of performing them, certain prayers and other institutions of the Church go back to the Sacred Tradition of the Apostles.

In their conferences, the Holy Synods draw not only from Holy Scriptures, but also from Sacred Tradition as from a pure fount. Thus, the Seventh Ecumenical Synod says in the 8th Decree: "If one violates any part of the CHURCH Tradition, either written or unwritten, let him be anathema."

Discovering God.

It is evident that unbelief is an evil offspring of an evil heart; for the guileless and pure heart everywhere discovers God, everywhere discerns Him, and always unhesitatingly believes in His existence. When the man of pure heart looks at the World of Nature, that is, at the sky, the earth, and the sea and at all things in them, and observes the systems constituting them, the infinite multitude of stars of heaven, the innumerable multitudes of birds and quadrupeds and every kind of animal of the earth, the variety of plants on it, the abundance of fish in the sea, he is immediately amazed and exclaims with the Prophet David: "How great are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom Thou made them all." Such a man, impelled by his pure heart, discovers God also in the World of Grace of the Church, from which the evil man is far removed. The man of pure heart believes in the Church, admires her spiritual system, discovers God in the Mysteries, in the heights of the theology, in the light of the Divine revelations, in the truths of the teachings, in the commandments of the Law, in the achievements of the Saints, in the very good deed, in every perfect gift, and in general in the whole of the creation. Justly then did the Lord say in His Beatitudes of those possessing purity of the heart: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Self-Knowledge.

He who does not know himself does not know God, either. And he who does not know God does not know the truth and the nature of things in general... He who does not know himself continually sins against God and continually moves farther away from Him. He who does not know the nature of things and what they truly are in themselves is powerless to evaluate them according to their worth and to discriminate between the mean and the precious, the worthless and the valuable. Wherefore, such a person wears himself out in the pursuit of vain and trivial things, and is unconcerned about and indifferent to the things that are eternal and most precious.

Man ought to will to know himself, to know God, and to understand the nature of things as they are in themselves, and this becomes an image and likeness of God.

Man.

Man is a composite being, made up of an earthly body and celestial soul... The soul is closely united with the body, yet wholly independent of it.

Man is not only reason but also heart. The powers of these two centers, mutually assisting one another, render man perfect and teach him what he could never learn through reason alone. If reason teaches about the natural world, the heart teaches us about the supernatural world... Man is perfect when he has developed both his heart and his intellect. Now the heart is developed through revealed religion

Immortality of the soul.

The rational soul of man has supernatural, infinite aspirations. If the rational soul were dependent upon the body and died together with the body, it should necessarily submit to the body and follow it in all its appetites. Independence would have been contrary both to the laws of nature and to reason, because it disturbs the harmony between the body and the soul. As dependent upon the body it should submit to the body and follow in all its appetites and desires, whereas, on the contrary, the soul masters the body, imposes its will upon the body. The soul subjugates and curbs the appetites and passions of the body, and directs them as it (the soul) wills. This phenomenon comes to the attention of every rational man; and whoever is conscious of his own rational soul is conscious of the soul's mastery over the body.

The mastery of the soul over the body is proved by the obedience of the body when it is being led with self-denial to sacrifice for the sake of the abstract ideas of the soul. The domination by the soul for prevalence of its principles, ideas, and views would have been entirely incomprehensible if the soul died together with the body. But a mortal soul would never have risen to such a height, would never have condemned itself to death along with the body for the prevalence of abstract ideas that lacked meaning, since no noble idea, no noble and courageous thought has any meaning for a mortal soul.

A soul, therefore, which is capable of such things, must be immortal.

Life after death.

The Teachers of the Eastern Orthodox Church, having Holy Scripture as their foundation, teach that those who die in the Lord go to a place of rest, according to the statement in the Apocalypse: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13). This place of rest is viewed as spiritual Paradise, where the souls of those who have died in the Lord, the souls of the righteous, enjoy the blessings of rest, while awaiting the day of rewarding and the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus...

About the sinners, they teach that their souls go down to Hades, where there is suffering, sorrow, and groaning, awaiting the dreadful day of the Judgment.

The Fathers of the Orthodox Church do not admit the existence of another place, intermediate between Paradise and Hades, as such a place is not mentioned in Holy Scripture.

After the end of the General Judgment, the Righteous Judge (God) will declare the decision both to the righteous and to the sinners. To the righteous He will say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" while to the sinners He will say: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And these will go away to eternal hades, while the righteous will go to eternal life.

This retribution after the General Judgment will be complete, final, and definitive. It will complete, because it is not the soul alone, as the Partial Judgment of man after death, but the soul together with the body, that will receive what is deserved. It will be final, because it will be enduring and not temporary like that at Partial Judgment. And it will be definitive, because both for the righteous and for the sinners it will be unalterable and eternal.

Saints.

Our Church honors saints not as gods, but as faithful servants, as holy men and friends of God. It extols the struggles they engaged in and the deeds they performed for the glory of God with the action of His grace, in such a way that all the honor that the Church gives them refers to the Supreme Being, Who has viewed their life on earth with gratification. The Church honors them by commemorating them annually through public celebrations and through the erection of Churches in honor of their name.

The holy men of God, who were magnified on earth by the Lord, have been honored by God's holy Church from the very time it was founded by the Savior Christ.

Repentance.

Two factors are involved in man's salvation: the grace of God and the will of man. Both must work together, if salvation is to be attained.

Repentance is a Mysterious through which he who repents for his sins confesses before a Spiritual Father who has been appointed by the Church and has received the authority to forgive sins, and receives from this Spiritual Father the remission of his sins and is reconciled with the Deity, against Whom he sinned.

Repentance signifies regret, change of mind. The distinguishing marks of repentance are contrition, tears, aversion towards sin, and love of the good.

Virtue.

We ought to do everything we can for the acquisition of virtue and moral wisdom (phronesis), for the prize is beautiful and the hope great.

The path of virtue is a path of effort and toil: "Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;" whereas the gate of vice is wide and the way spacious, but lead to perdition.

Spiritual Training.

Spiritual training (pneumatic gymnasia) is askesis for piety. It is most valuable, "having promise for the life that now is, and for that which is to come." The efforts made for the sake of piety bring spiritual gladness.

Theophylaktos says: "Train yourself for piety, that is, for pure faith and the right life. Training, then, and continual efforts are necessary; for he who trains exercises until he perspires, even when there is no contest."

Training accustoms one to be lenient, temperate, capable of controlling his anger, subduing his desires, doing works of charity, showing love for his fellow men, practicing virtue. Training is virtuous askesis, rendering one's way of life admirable.

Askesis is practice, meditation, training, self-control, love of labor.

Fasting.

Fasting is an ordinance of the Church, obliging the Christian to observe it on specific days. Concerning fasting, our Savior teaches: "When thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father Who is in secret: and thy Father, Who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." From what the Savior teaches we learn (a) that fasting is pleasing to God, and (b) that he who fasts for the uplifting of his mind and heart towards God shall be rewarded by God, Who is a most liberal bestower of Divine gifts, for his devotion.

In the New Testament fasting is recommended as a means of preparing the mind and the heart for divine worship, for long prayer, for rising from the earthly, and for spiritualization.

Inner Attention.

ATTENTION is the first teacher of truth and consequently absolutely necessary. Attention rouses the soul to study itself and its longings, to learn their true character and repulse those that are unholy. Attention is the guardian angel of the intellect, always counseling it this : be attentive. Attention awakens the soul, rouses it from sleep... Attention examines every thought, every desire, every memory. Thoughts, desires, and memories are engendered by various causes, and often appear masked and with splendid garb, in order to deceive the inattentive intellect and enter into the soul and dominate it. Only attention can reveal their hidden form. Often their dissimulation is so perfect that the discernment of their true nature is very difficult and requires the greatest attention. One must remember the saving words of the Lord: "Be wakeful and pray that ye enter not into temptation." He who is wakeful does not enter into temptation, because he is vigilant and attentive.

Prayer.

TRUE PRAYER is undistracted, prolonged, performed with a contrite heart an alert intellect. The vehicle of prayer is everywhere humility, and prayer is a manifestation of humility. For being conscious of our own weakness, we invoke the power of GOD.

PRAYER unites one with GOD, being a divine conversation and spiritual communion with the Being that is most beautiful and highest.

PRAYER IS FORGETTING EARTHLY THINGS,
AN ASCENT TO HEAVEN.
THROUGH PRAYER
WE FLEE TO GOD.

PRAYER is truly a heavenly armor, and is alone can keep safe those who have dedicated themselves to God. Prayer is the common medicine for purifying ourselves from the passions, for hindering sin and curing our faults. Prayer is an inexhaustible treasure, an unruffled harbor, the foundation of serenity, the root and mother of myriad's of blessings.

Holy Communion.

The MYSTERION of the Divine Eucharist that has been handed down by the Lord is the highest of all the MYSTERIA; it is the most wondrous of all the miracles which the power of God has performed; it is the highest which the wisdom of God has conceived; it is the most precious of all the gifts which the love of God has bestowed upon men. For all the other miracles result through a transcendence of certain laws of Nature, but the MYSTERION of the DIVINE

EUCCHARIST transcends all these laws. Hence it may justly be called, and be viewed as, the miracle of miracles and the MYSTERION of MYSTERIA.

DO YOU WANT TO BECOME A PARTAKER
OF THE BLESSINGS CONFERRED
BY DIVINE COMMUNION?
DO YOU WANT YOUR SALVATION?
BECOME A TRUE CHRISTIAN,
HAVE FEAR OF GOD,
FAITH IN THE MYSTERION OF DIVINE COMMUNION,
AND LOVE FOR GOD
AND FOR YOUR NEIGHBOR.

Miracles.

MIRACLES are not impossible from a logical standpoint, and right reason does not deny them. Natural laws do not have the claim to be the only ones, nor are they threatened with being overturned by the appearance of other laws, supernatural ones, which also are conducive to the development and furtherance of creation... Miracles are consequence of the Creator's love for his creatures.

Source: "Modern Orthodox Saints, St. Nectarios of Aegina," by (Dr.) Constantine Cavarinos, Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Belmont, Massachusetts., 1981., pp. 154-187.

Missionary Leaflet # EA40
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(saint_nektarios_egina_e.doc, 01-03-2004)

Edited by	Date